



ECA

**COVID-19 PROTOCOL
GUIDE**

2022

This document is produced based on WHO Interim guidance for sport federations and event organisers when running competition in the context of COVID-19.

We would like also to refer HOCs to the WHO Key Planning Recommendation for Mass Gatherings in the context of COVID-19.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Reduce the risk of infected individuals attending the competition.
- Reduce the risk of infected individuals transmitting the disease.
- Reduce the risk of athletes missing significant amounts of training and competition due to “long covid”.
- Reduce the risk of competitions being cancelled due to a Covid outbreak.
- Outline financial and logistical responsibilities for NF’s in testing and vaccination.
- Highlighting rapidly changing organisational impact of Covid 19.
- Provide guidance to HOC on mitigating risks of Covid 19 infection whilst hosting competitions.

Please note – this document is a guide. The ECA Anti-doping and sports medicine Technical Delegate wishes to support HOC’s in preparing their own processes in order to minimise the risk of Covid 19 infection within the competition environment and the subsequent impact of infection on all involved. It is important to also note that the Omicron variant of Covid 19 is not “mild”. Significant numbers of deaths and hospitalisation are still occurring with this variant around the world.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. At any time, local or national policy in terms of Personal Protective Equipment or any health and safety measures can lead to a quick evolution of this protocol to allow safe organisation.
2. Depending on the prevalent variant (e.g. Omicron) in the host country at the time, there may need to be rapid escalation of mitigation procedures.
3. Negative test required prior to access to a competition venue.
4. Rapid antigen testing during venue access.
5. Capacity of testing at the venue/locally in case of emergency.
6. Test, Trace and Isolate during competition access period.
7. Departure testing if required.
8. Testing procedures when travelling between competitions.
9. ECA recommendations for accommodation / meals management.
10. Covid vaccination.
11. Respect for host nation local Department of Health rules.
12. Acknowledgement of new variants of concern and associated risks.

Local government and regional Covid regulations are based on the local population, the vaccination percentage and current burden to the health care system in that country/region. They do not take into account mass gatherings of people from multiple countries and the increased risk that presents. Institutions such as universities and health care facilities will have their own policies in place that are more stringent than local recommendations for this very reason. Therefore, having simple, effective measures in place at competition venues that encourage more protection than current local policy is a reasonable and safer approach than the minimum required in the rest of the country of competition.

PRIOR TO THE ACCESS PERIOD

Final decision to run the competition

The ECA continuously reviews the situation with the Host National Federation (HNF) and the Host Organising Committee (HOC). Any decision will rely on current advice, specific to the Host Country Government and advice on the pandemic globally, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Access to the host country

Legal requirements may be imposed, such as COVID-19 testing prior to or on arrival. This will be guided by Governmental and WHO advice or legal requirements and will not be made by the ECA. Some nations may have a legal requirement to be fully vaccinated against Covid 19 on entry.

The HOC will provide updated information as soon as practically possible in a document published on the ECA website: <https://www.canoe-europe.org>

Accreditation Centre

A maximum number present in the centre may be imposed according to local policy, with a minimum distance between people of 1-2m (depending on local guidance). A one-way system should be in operation and be clearly marked.

Accreditation staff and all accessing accreditation centres must wear masks. Additional PPE will be worn if requested by local or national PPE policy.

Access to the competition

All National Team Members, Officials, ECA Personnel, Members of the HOC will be required to comply with the following in order to be accredited/allowed access:

- A negative rapid antigen test immediately prior to arrival. Any positive result must immediately isolate and notify the covid coordinator of the HOC.
- PERSONAL HEALTH CHECK INFORMATION FORM in the English language. The template is in appendix 2.
- Consecutive competitions require a further negative rapid antigen test prior to access.

Vaccination

- The ECA Anti-doping and sports medicine Technical Delegate highly recommends vaccination to a level that is considered to provide adequate protection by the WHO at that point in time, e.g. including booster vaccination.
- Vaccination doesn't eliminate virus transmission but significantly reduces the risk of becoming unwell if infected. Previous infection alone with Covid 19 within the last 6 months does not carry the same level of protection.
- It is recommended to carry proof of vaccination status.

Participating National Federations

Each participating National Federation will be expected to have undertaken their own risk assessment, have a Covid19 safety protocol in place and to have taken appropriate precautionary measures prior to travel.

Each participating National Federation is responsible for all costs (including medications) should any member of their team be required to go into quarantine at any time from arrival to departure and/or be hospitalised or to return to the country of departure.

Each participating National Federation is responsible for all costs associated with Covid 19 testing prior to arrival, during the competition and pre-departure where necessary. HOC's are encouraged not to profit from the sale of covid 19 testing devices.

ECA responsibility

The ECA does not accept any responsibility for COVID-19 infection that occurs before, during or after the competition. The ECA encourages NF's to adhere to all advised precautionary measures to reduce the risk of infection and transmission.

Host National Federation and Host Organising Committee responsibility

The HNF and HOC will respect all the recommendation and obligations imposed by their Government and local authorities to reduce the risk of transmission.

They do not accept any responsibility for COVID-19 infection that occurs before, during or after the competition.

Participant/staff/ECA family responsibility

In order to enable ECA sanctioned competitions to continue to take place with minimal disruption requires all involved to actively engage in appropriate covid 19 countermeasures as described in this document

A COVID-19 Manager should be appointed for the competitions by the HOC. This person should have appropriate training in Health and Safety and have detailed knowledge of the preventative procedures required to prevent and contain the spread of COVID- 19.

The Covid-19 manager role will be as follows:

- The COVID-19 Manager will have ultimate responsibility and command of the COVID-19 Health and Safety procedures at the Venue.
- Prior to the competition to ensure that the venue is compliant with the regulations set out here.
- Ensure that HOC staff are appropriately trained in relation to COVID-19.
- Coordinate and verify compliance at the venue with the provisions and protocols set out within this document during preparation, training and competition days.
- Liaise with ECA and relevant local authorities.
- Report COVID-19 related incidents to the ECA and local authorities if needed.
- The COVID-19 Manager will be informed of any person on the venue site who becomes unwell with suspected COVID-19. They will be responsible for ensuring the immediate isolation and arrange testing procedures for that individual and liaise with the local health authorities regarding further treatment or isolation according to the national guidelines.

Transportation service

All buses, minibuses and cars used to transport the Teams, the ECA Board Members, ECA Officials and all other ECA or HOC appointed competition personnel should ideally be operated in accordance with the required 'Social Distancing' and hygiene measures. These measures may include a limit on the number of persons to be transported in each respective vehicle. Additionally, seats may need to be 'closed off' to ensure the required social distancing between each passenger. All occupants of the transport, including the driver, are recommended to wear face masks. For constituted groups (e.g. couples, people travelling together, regular shuttles of the same athletes between locations), social distancing is not mandatory.

Each vehicle must have common touch points cleaned between trips with an appropriate disinfectant which is effective against Covid 19.

ITOs accommodation

The ITOs accommodation needs to be considered to be organised in single rooms as much as practically possible. Twin rooms can be considered if:

- a. ITOs usually live together;
- b. ITOs travel together to the competition;
- c. ITOs come from the same country and agree to share a room.
- d. ITOs are regularly together when performing their official duties.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES INSIDE THE VENUE DURING THE ACCESS PERIOD

Entry points of athletes' area

Signage should be displayed with recommended health checks prior to entry. Temperature checks on entry are not mandatory and we encourage all those accessing the venue to isolate and report if feverish or experiencing other symptoms of covid 19 infection.

Face masks

All accredited persons are recommended to wear a face mask indoors except when eating, drinking or exercising (dry land warm-up, warm-down and recovery from racing). The face masks must be worn over the mouth and nose to be most effective.

Hand sanitisers

Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be available at multiple locations around athletes' areas, technical areas and other places such as at the entry points of the athletes' area, each building and room, boatsheds, team rooms/tents, dining area, sanitary facilities, etc.

Social distancing measures

Social distancing should be respected. The recommended minimum distance between people is 1.5m for any indoor area and 1m for outdoor areas.

All persons attending the competition should avoid close contact such as handshakes and embraces.

If there are planned opening or closing ceremonies, they should be considered without participation of athletes, NFs and ICF members.

Cleaning and sanitising

Regular disinfectant cleaning and sanitising the premises are the fundamental actions that, together with interpersonal distancing and ventilation, can avoid the spread of the virus.

All participants will be made aware of the importance of complying with the rules of hygienic-sanitary behaviour to help maintain the maximum cleanliness and healthiness of shared environments.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Masks will be provided for all ITO's and all technical staff who are required to work indoors or within 1.5m of another person.
- One mask per person should be provided for each session (one for the morning and one for the afternoon sessions).
- Spare masks for replacement will be available at any time.
- Face masks for the team members and other participants should be provided by themselves and conform to WHO and host Government recommendations and rules. See appendix 3 on effectiveness of mask use in limiting transmission of Covid 19.

Contact lists

Each section requires a full contact list of their part of the organisation in order to facilitate Track and Trace if needed:

- a. ECA: staff, ITOs, board members, team leaders of participating National Federations, ECA providers.
- b. Participating National Federations: all members of their delegations.
- c. HOC: HOC staff, accredited VIP, accredited media, volunteers, providers.

External providers

Anyone participating as an external employee (cleaning staff, food handlers, drivers etc.) must wear a face mask and other PPE if necessary e.g. gloves.

Medical services and COVID-19 tests

- A Covid 19 Rapid Antigen test kit collection centre may be present at the competition venue.
- Covid 19 Rapid Antigen testing for all accredited individuals is encouraged to occur twice per week during venue access and between competitions which are less than two weeks apart.
- Timeline to be agreed depending on the duration of the access period and the stay period.
- At any time ECA can decide to launch a series of tests in case of suspicion and / or positive test.
- A positive lateral flow/rapid antigen test must be immediately reported to the covid 19 manager and the person must immediately isolate.
- Anybody experiencing symptoms of Covid 19 but with a negative lateral flow/rapid antigen test, should also immediately isolate and be reported to the Covid 19 manager to consider arranging a Covid 19 PCR test.
- Isolation should be for 7 days. Day 1 is termed as the day of the positive test or the day symptoms began. Negative lateral flow tests on day 6 and 7 are required before isolation can end. (note local regulations may require a longer period of isolation)
- Anybody in close contact with the positive person will be tested with a Rapid Antigen test and if negative, will require daily lateral flow testing for 5 days.

- Rapid Antigen or PCR testing for the contact case based on health authorities' requirements for wider population.
- Mandatory departure tests may be required for accredited people who will travel directly to another ECA competition or returning home where a negative test is required – cost to be covered by individuals or NF's.

Definition of a close contact

Close contacts are those who have prolonged contact (for 15 minutes or more) with a person who has a confirmed positive COVID-19 test, within one metre, without wearing a face mask. This is particularly applicable when such contact happens in enclosed spaces such as hotel rooms or vehicles.

The ECA, the HNF and the HOC will try to support the concerned persons (positive covid test/close contact etc) as much as they can.

Signage on site

Signs with basic public health measures of wearing a mask or face covering correctly, social distancing, hand washing etc will be emphasised across all areas. The recommended signage will be used (see appendix 1).

Team Leaders meeting

The team leaders meeting will ideally be run as a videoconference. If not, then social distancing, mask wearing, good ventilation and hand hygiene is required.

Sport information office

All technical information will be available electronically where practically possible and published on the information boards. Consider avoidance of paper copies being provided to the TLs.

Info desk

The people at the Info desk should ideally be protected with a plastic shield (e.g. as used in a supermarket).

Athlete village

- Where possible, each National Team will be allocated an area for their team that will be separated from other team areas with greater distance.
- Possibility for teams to place their own tent.
- Hand sanitiser will be made available for the athlete area, but team members should also provide their own hand sanitiser and disinfectant wipes.
- Toilet facilities for teams will be cleaned regularly.

Areas for embarkation and disembarkation

- Spacing must be respected while waiting for embarkation and disembarkation.

Boat and equipment control

- First boat control is a self-check.
- Second boat control could be:
- Boats dropped off at designated areas for each boat (ideally not all at the same place, to avoid crowding).
- Volunteers will take the boats with avoidance of physical contact with the athletes and their paddles.
- Athletes will be given masks if they wish.
- During the boat control athletes must stay at the designated area.
- After the boat control the volunteers will return the boats to the athlete.
- The volunteers and the ITOs are recommended to wear masks and check the boats and equipment without physical contact where possible. Regular hand hygiene by the volunteers is recommended.

Mixed zone and media operation

The mixed zone (media) will be adapted to allow social distancing.

Award Ceremony

- The awards ceremony will take place in an area in which only the awarded athletes and at the most, one companion with a face mask will enter.
- Masks will be always worn by all participants.
- 1m distance will be maintained between all participants.
- The medal presenter will use hand sanitiser before the start of the award ceremony.
- Each athlete will take the medal from the presenter and place it around their own neck.
- Handshakes, hugs or embraces should be avoided.

Catering area and lunch services

Lunch services for National Federations:

- a. It is preferable to suggest that lunch boxes are delivered to each team.
- b. If a common dining area, consider including appropriate plastic barriers between all individual seating areas and regular disinfection of the tables, chairs and surrounds.

Lunch for all other accredited person:

- a. Catering area organised with one-way system OR
- b. Lunch box

Car park for National Federations

A dedicated area will be identified and will not be accessible to the public.

Offices, media centre, technical areas and lounges (e.g. ITOs lounge, ECA office)

The following principles need to be considered:

- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and within each room. Anyone entering or leaving an office or room must use hand sanitiser.
- The distance between officials at their place of work indoors must be a minimum of 1.5m.
- The number of officials at each technical area will be reduced to the minimum required. No-one will be allowed to enter a technical area unless required for operation of the event.
- Risk of infection is reduced if there is free airflow through an indoor area. Consider which windows or doors can be kept open to maximise airflow.
- Disinfectant sprays or wipes must be available in each area to clean equipment such as keyboards, headsets, walkie-talkies regularly and this **MUST** be done between users. Each area will be cleaned regularly throughout the day and this cleaning schedule will be agreed with the technical officers and the HOC.

Failure to comply with the protocol

- National teams, including all technical officers, staff and athletes will be expected to comply with this protocol to respect their fellow participants, the HOC and local guidelines.

Grandstand

- The competition will be organised with/without or reduced number of public spectators based on the current Government rules and regulations.
- A separate part of the stands will be provided for the participants. Accredited individuals should not enter public stands/viewing areas.
- We encourage mask wearing in the grandstands.

MANAGEMENT OF A SICK INDIVIDUAL WHERE COVID-19 IS SUSPECTED

- If a person is suspected to be infected on arrival at the entry point, he/she will be reported to the COVID-19 Manager. The concerned person should be isolated and a rapid antigen test must be done. If positive a confirmatory PCR test is not required and they will be returned to their accommodation to continue isolation and must follow the directions of the relevant authority according to local or national guidelines.
- If a person falls ill at the competition with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19, they will be escorted immediately to an isolation area by a member of technical staff. Their team leader and the COVID-19 Manager will be informed. The COVID-19 Manager will advise on triage, according to the local government guidelines. A Rapid Antigen test must be done. If positive, a confirmatory PCR test is not required and they will be returned to their accommodation and must follow the directions of the relevant authority according to local or national guidelines.
- If a person is symptomatic but has a negative rapid antigen test, they should still remain isolated until the result of a confirmatory PCR test is known. Alternatively remain isolated with daily Rapid Antigen testing while symptoms persist.

In case of positive test or suspicion:

NFs members:

- ✓ One case in a team, immediate isolation and Rapid Antigen testing for all close contacts.
- ✓ Assessment of actions needed with local health authorities & ECA medical technical delegate.
- ✓ All close contacts must be tested and if negative, athletes can compete but will be restricted to minimal movements (special bubble for contact people with negative tests).

✓ If a further positive case occurs outside of the index case close contact in one team, the whole team may need to be isolated and quarantined until results of further rapid antigen testing are known.

Other people from ECA, HOC, ITOs, Media, security, volunteers:

- ✓ Immediate isolation and testing for all contact people.
- ✓ Assessment of actions required with local health authorities & ECA medical technical delegate.
- ✓ If negative result, they can operate but will be restricted to minimal movements.

All expenses for isolation or needed quarantine must be paid by the concerned entity.

Management of the communications flow for a covid-19 positive test during the access period

Should an individual directly involved with any ECA competition test positive for Covid-19, the following procedures will be implemented to ensure the communication flow. This applies to all accredited persons at the competition: athletes, team staff, equipment technicians, ECA providers, ITOs, ECA representatives, HOC members, etc.

- Upon receipt of a positive test, the team/individual shall immediately inform the Covid-19 Manager.
- The Covid-19 Manager will inform the ECA/HOC coordination group (HOC general manager, HOC technical organiser, ECA Chief Official, ECA Technical delegate and ECA Media manager) of the situation, who will assess the next steps necessary with the Local Public Health Authorities.

- No external communication may be made by the team/individual until the ECA/HOC coordination group has assessed the circumstances and next step necessary with the Local Public Health Authorities.
- Once the assessment is made and next steps defined, official information (to be done by ECA media manager) to be sent firstly to the designated contact for the positive case (e.g. Team leaders) outlining the intended communication flow.
- The first external information will be made through the ECA Official Communication. It will not contain names of individuals involved, or details. It is meant strictly to inform that a person has tested positive and any necessary next steps involved.
- Should timing be appropriate, and all parties agree, the information can also be communicated by the ECA to all Team Leaders to facilitate additional communication to the key stakeholder groups, namely the athletes.
- Following any announcement to all team Leaders, the ECA Official Communication will be sent. At no point, ever, will details of the infected person be released by the ECA or HOC.
- At this time, the teams/individuals may also put out information to the media with more detail about the positive case, if desired, whilst maintaining confidentiality of the affected person.
- Following the Official Communication, ECA will only answer media enquiries that pertain directly to the competition and any impact on the competition. All health and team-related questions will be referred to the team/individual/group involved.

Please note these guidelines refer only to the external communication of a positive test. Informing the local authorities should follow the government guidelines in place at the time and in the region.

APPENDIX 1 – SIGNAGE / POSTERS

- How to wear a medical mask safely:

<https://healthservice.hse.ie/filelibrary/staff/safe-mask-wear-a4-poster.pdf>

- How to hand wash:

https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandWash_Poster.pdf?ua=1

- Wearing and removal of PPE:

https://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ppe_en.pdf?ua=1%2021%20of23

How to disinfect for Covid:

<https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/what-to-know/prevention-safety/protect/clean>

Instructions for participants:

- Wear a mask indoor and where possible outdoors too.
- Wear a face mask while travelling on shuttle buses and avoid public transport.
- Maintain a distance of 1.5-2m from other people.
- Avoid close contacts such as handshakes and hugging.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose with hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water and use an alcohol- based hand sanitiser.
- Clean items that can be touched by other people.
- Do not share personal items such as towels, water bottles, etc. with others!
- Frequently ventilate indoor spaces.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with tissue! If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow - sleeve (not your hands).
- If you have persistent fever, cough or difficulty in breathing, put on a mask and go to a health clinic.
- Avoid contact with sick people, including avoiding close contact with those suffering from acute respiratory infections.

APPENDIX 2 - PERSONAL HEALTH CHECK INFORMATION FORM

Name <i>(as shown on passport or ID card)</i>		
National Federation		
Permanent place of residence		
Address during the event		
Mobile phone number		
E-mail address		
Countries you visited or stayed in over the last 14 days		
	NO	YES
Have you had any of the following symptoms during the last 14 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny nose • Sneezing • Sore Throat • Severe Fatigue • Aching muscles or joints • Difficulty breathing • Loss of taste or smell • Headache • Cough • Fever • Nausea/Vomiting • Diarrhoea • Low back pain • Unusual abdominal pain 		
Have you recently had contact with a proven Covid 19 positive individual?		
Have you had to quarantine or told to self isolate within the last 14 days?		
Have you had a negative rapid antigen or PCR test immediately prior to competition venue access?		

Signature and date:

APPENDIX 3 – EFFECTIVENESS OF MASK USE ON LIMITING COVID 19 TRANSMISSION – NOTE THIS DATA IS BASED ON THE DELTA VARIANT, OMICRON IS MORE EASILY TRANSMITTED

Time it takes to transmit an infectious dose of Covid-19

		PERSON NOT INFECTED IS WEARING			
		Nothing	Cloth mask	Surgical mask	N95
PERSON INFECTED IS WEARING	Nothing	15 min.	20 min.	30 min.	2.5 hours
	Cloth mask	20 min.	27 min.	40 min.	3.3 hours
	Surgical mask	30 min.	40 min.	1 hour	5 hours
	N95	2.5 hours	3.3 hours	5 hours	25 hours

It will take 25 hours for an infectious dose of Covid-19 to transmit between people wearing non-fit-tested N95 respirators. **If they're using tightly sealed N95s—where only 1% of particles enter the facepiece—they will have 2,500 hours of protection.**

Note: Results published in Spring 2021. The CDC expects the Omicron variant to spread more easily.
Source: ACGIH's Pandemic Response Task Force